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INFO RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 4106  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY  
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RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000675

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/08/2028

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SUBJECT: TURKEY: TNP COUNTERS TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN THE SCHOOLS

Classified By: Acting DCM Kim DeBlauw. Reasons: 1.4 (b)(d).

¶1. (C) Summary. The Turkish National Police (TNP) in Ankara are countering efforts by terrorist groups to recruit in high schools, according to TNP sources. The terrorist groups typically befriend vulnerable youth through "innocent" activities and gradually introduce anti-government comments and their specific ideologies. The TNP is trying to reach all Ankara high school students through programs stressing the consequences of terrorism and by encouraging closer ties between the community and the police. End summary.

¶2. (C) The PKK and other terrorist groups, including DHKP-C and al-Qaida, are actively recruiting in Turkey's high schools, including those in Ankara and Istanbul, according to Turkish National Police (TNP) Major Ahmet S. Yayla (please protect). These groups set up regional committees to reach out to high schools, especially those with relatives of current members. Typically, they start by establishing friendships with youths, inviting them to picnics and other "innocent" gatherings, develop social bonds and gradually introduce their ideological message through casual criticism of the government's policies or activities. They escalate to asking the youths to distribute leaflets, write anti-government or pro-group graffiti, and move on to inciting them to throw Molotov cocktails and engage in other more violent activity. The age cohort most heavily targeted by the groups is the high-school years, 15-18.

¶3. (C) To counter terrorist recruitment, TNP in some jurisdictions has begun an active campaign in the schools to educate teachers and students about the consequences of terrorism and to sensitize them to recruitment efforts, Yayal continued. The program also aims to "de-demonize" the police, who are painted by terrorists and other radical groups as abusive and corrupt. In Ankara, for example, principals and teachers from all 212 Ankara high schools are brought to police headquarters and briefed about terrorist tactics to reach youth.

¶4. (C) More ambitiously, throughout the year, all 70,000 Ankara high school students are assembled, four schools at a time, in a police headquarters conference hall for a program including video presentations on terrorism and its consequences. Students are also told how they can reach out anonymously to the police to report suspicious activity. To

reinforce the anti-terrorism message, and enliven the proceedings, the program includes competition among the schools in counterterrorism knowledge. Pre-selected student representatives from each of the four schools are quizzed on terrorism-related topics (as in the old "College Bowl"). The winners are awarded gifts like small cameras or MP3 players and then move on to the next level in the city-wide competition. The winning schools get prizes such as computers or televisions. All students attending get key chains, pens or similar souvenirs. Most of the funding for the program is solicited from local businesses and supplemented by the local authorities, Yayal explained.

¶5. (C) Comment. It should not be surprising that terrorist groups are now targeting Turkish urban youth. TNPs efforts to counter these recruitment attempts are novel and seem designed to appeal to youth through popular culture. They are the kinds of activities that deserve our support.

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